

The New Times

August 2021

The Parish Magazine of Llantilio Crossenny,
Llanvetherine, Llanvapley and Penrhos



Llantilio Crossenny Church was the venue for Lucy's big day



and Llanvetherine Church welcomed Millie at her baptism

From the Vicarage

Listening to 'Songs of Praise' last Sunday lunchtime, my mind was quickly drawn back to my ordination as Deacon five years ago and as Priest a year later. On Sunday, the television congregation launched enthusiastically into the ordination hymn, 'Here I Am Lord' (aka 'I, the Lord of Sea and Sky') which was sung at both my ordination services. I hadn't known the hymn before, but how powerful it is. And the more often I hear it, the more powerful its message seems to be. It doesn't take any scholarship to realise it's based on the story of Samuel hearing God calling him in the night. Eli kept sending him back to bed, that is, until the third time when Eli clicked what was happening, and told Samuel the next time to respond: 'Speak, for your servant is listening' (1 Samuel 3).



It took a little while even for the elderly, sage Eli to realise what was going on, and while there are several messages to come from this wider, wonderful, evocative passage, there is perhaps an important reminder to all of us, not just those called to ordained ministry, but to all of us called to our collective ministry. The reminder is that if any one of us should hear a call in the night, or at any other time, we should stop to think carefully about who is calling, and listen. It's one of the few Old Testament Bible passages that stuck with me in childhood, and I well recall the wonderment of God speaking personally to Samuel lying asleep in the Temple.

If you don't know the hymn, I do recommend an internet search for it. Published only in 1981, it was written quickly for an ordination mass by the Jesuit musical scholar, Dan Schutte, in St Louis. It's a hymn of huge hope, comfort and promise - it's a reminder that God will speak to you personally - yes, you.

Do give it a try - but please be prepared!

With all Blessings,

Andrew

There are many versions of this hymn available on the internet. Perhaps you might like to try this one. Click [here](#). *Editor*

Ministry Area News

The inaugural Ministry Area Transition Team (MATT) meeting for the North Monmouthshire/Abergavenny Rural Ministry Area was held at St Michael's Church, Llanfihangel Crucorney at 7.30pm on Thursday 15th July.

Fifteen people attended the meeting including Revd. Heidi, Tom Lowes from Llanvapley and Margaret Parry representing Llantilio Crossenny. The meeting was hosted by Fr. Julian Gray from Llantilio Pertholey.

Fr. Julian opened the meeting by saying that, after consideration, he felt that the MATT meetings should be open to attendance by a representative from every one of the 18 churches in our Ministry Area (MA). The MA is based on a "Rectorial Benefice" also known as a "Team Ministry" in England. We need to decide on a name for our own MA. It is the requirement for shared governance and financial arrangements which have caused most concern, but the aim is to pool resources so we can better nurture church congregations while retaining individual church identities. However there is a great deal of worry and some people are already withholding donations until matters are clarified to their satisfaction.

Governance Fr. Julian wishes to see one person from each church on the eventual MA Council together with each priest in charge. The MAC is the new body that will assume existing individual church PCC legal powers for the MA. Church Committees will replace the existing PCCs and will be vitally important as in effect they will control the MAC.

Finance A huge number of concerns have been raised and the Diocese has taken note of them. A general discussion concluded that the Diocese has not yet given enough thought to the nuts and bolts of how accounting and banking arrangements would work and it was decided that we should hold further discussions with the Diocesan Finance Office about these matters.

Ministry Team Fr. Julian explained that he is absolutely determined that all of the existing ordained clergy in the MA will be retained. This in turn means that we must keep all vicarages as well as maintaining other valuable assets such as parish newsletters.

Timetable The original deadline for MA completion was 31st December 2021. Fr. Julian hopes that we can achieve it by July 2022.

Bishop's Visit Bishop Cherry's visit will start on Thursday 29th July at Llanthony Abbey. Thence to Llantilio Crossenny for a "Getting to know you" session at 11.30am followed by a picnic lunch.

Date & venue of next MATT meeting is 7pm on Thursday 2nd September at St Bridget's Church, Skenfrith.

Llanarth Church rejuvenation project with bells to boot!

LOCKDOWN hindered, but has not dimmed, the aim of local buildings preservation charity, **The Village Alive Trust**, to rejuvenate the closed St Teilo's Church at Llanarth for the community with a variety of uses... including rehanging the bells for a training school to be set up. But help is needed!

The Grade II* listed church closed in 2013 when a report flagged up expensive restoration work was needed. The renowned ring of eight bells, frame and fittings were removed and safely stored in 2014 by volunteer members of the Llandaff and Monmouth Diocesan Association of Church Bell Ringers. The base girders of the bell frame which were installed in the tower during renovation work in 1981 remained in situ.

When the Association heard of the Village Alive Trust's work to bid for grant funding to carry out conservation and refurbishment of the building an opportunity was seen to create a dedicated facility for ringing activities and the teaching of bell ringing.

Matthew Turner, of the Association, said: "In the area covered by the traditional county of Monmouthshire there are a number of towers which have no band of bell ringers, or where bands are struggling, particularly in the more rural parts of the area. Given the location of Llanarth, it could also serve as a facility for ringers in mid-Wales and in Herefordshire.

"It is hoped that a ringing centre would boost the recruitment of new ringers and the skills of existing ringers within the wider Monmouthshire area. It would provide a centralised resource and facilities around which to base our publicity and training. It is feared that, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on bell ringing, there may be a reduction in the number of bellringers across the county," said Matthew.

Pat Griffiths, chairman of The Village Alive Trust, has family links with the church and explained that bringing back the bells had featured widely in the community questionnaire response carried out pre-Covid. A Viability Study paid for by the Trust, aided by an Architectural Heritage Fund grant, has produced a community use proposal in which a bell ringing centre could feature.

Pat said, "Matthew has assured us that during practice sessions the bells would be muffled so residents would not be unduly disturbed but imagine the occasions when these beautiful bells, some of which date from 1820, could ring out once again over the surrounding countryside...part of the idyll of this rural area where traditional pursuits still flourish.

"The church building proposals include roof restoration and refurbishment to create a kitchen, WC, community spaces for café/ shop as well as small exhibitions, choral concerts and festivals at Christmas and Easter. The chancel, with its stained glass window could become a glass screened sanctuary space, or columbarium, for the storage of loved ones cremated

ashes in rented discreet and secure niches.

“The bell ringing school would be able to access the bell chamber through a new door off a mezzanine level at the tower end of the nave. The mezzanine would be glass screened and would provide a view of the cavernous church interior with its memorial plaques and pulpit, and through the glass screened chancel to the stained glass window”.

The proposals, which would see a suspended floor allowing easy access into the building, include underfloor heating, and the transformative but sensitive plans have already been appreciated by Monmouthshire County Council’s conservation officer.

The Church in Wales, which put the redundant church up for sale, is fully supportive of the Trust’s plans and will also allow the still open churchyard to be managed as part of the proposal. Gwent Wildlife Trust are also supporting the wildlife habitat of the churchyard which sits alongside productive farmland.

“Despite months of work behind the scenes by email during lockdown the real battle to bring everything together for a huge funding bid for this historic landmark is just beginning, “ said Pat Griffiths.

“We have a vision, which is shared by many people already, of making this building watertight, warm, useful, easier to maintain but above all, still a community facility, open to locals and visitors alike to enjoy its long history, its quiet space, its setting and its bells which were lovingly restored and added to in the 1980s.

“Much appreciated volunteers are coming forward to help in practical ways, and we are receiving small gifts towards the match funding costs of any grant we secure, but there is always more help needed. Please come on board! All of the Trust members are volunteers giving freely of time and often their professional expertise. Immediate costs that we can foresee, before even drawing up a complete proposal for a grant bid, include paying for an extensive bat survey, over 12 months.”

Anyone who can help, or donate, perhaps in memory of a relative buried at Llanarth, can find out more by visiting www.villagealive.trust.org.uk or by emailing village.alive@btinternet.com by contacting Rev Dr Jean Prosser MBE on 07484 692169 or Pat Griffiths on 01873 821418.

The Trust is aiming to have a Heritage Open Doors event at St Teilo’s, Llanarth on the afternoon of Saturday, September 4th. Although access into the building is not possible it is hoped to allow the space to be viewed through the open doors. An exhibition of proposals and refreshments will



take place during the afternoon at the village hall, which sits between the church and The Pitt hamlet.

Pictured is the church tower at Llanarth and two of the bells which were removed in 2014 and placed in storage.

Bishop Cherry's Pastoral Visit

On Thursday 29th July, we were delighted to welcome Bishop Cherry to the area. The Bishop had come to meet representatives from the different parishes; it also gave her an opportunity to see the wonderful landscape and scenery in which we live and minister.

The morning started at Llanthony, where we shared a time of worship in the stunning surroundings of the Abbey.

The Bishop spoke very powerfully and movingly of her journey of faith. It was both refreshing and humbling to listen to her share her story with us. It seemed all the more poignant to hear her within the Abbey grounds.



After coffee we made our way through the lanes to Llantilio Crossenny. Here we were all able to spend some time with the Bishop, and she with us, as we shared in a picnic lunch, before her departure.

It was a joyous visit, and I hope that we will soon be able to welcome Bishop Cherry to each of our churches.

A big thank you to all who cleaned and decorated the church in preparation for the Bishop's visit. We even had purple flowers – very fitting for an episcopal visit!

Rev. Heidi

Llantilio Crossenny News

On the 10th July our daughter Lucy married Stewart Hodges at Llantilio Crossenny Church. Lucy is the daughter of Colin and Yvonne Phillips and youngest granddaughter of George and Ruth of Dairy Farm.

Lucy was supported by her bridesmaids Jenny, Amy (sisters) and Melissa. The page boys

were Harry and Ieuan, and Ophelia was the flower girl. It was a fabulous day, though very different, very strange meeting everyone outside the church, rather than inside, due to restrictions. The ceremony was followed by a reception in the marquee at home at Dairy Farm. Lucy and Stewart have made their home in Caerwent, where they have lived for the past five years. *Yvonne Phillips*



A new gardening club During the past 18 months I've been spending many more hours in my garden which, like many of us, I have so enjoyed. I've always enjoyed gardening but have a limited knowledge and am keen to learn more! I thought it might be an idea to start a local gardening club

where we could learn from each other, exchange plants and invite guest speakers. I am looking at holding a monthly meeting at Llanvapley Hall which could be either during the daytime or evening. If you are interested in coming along to an initial meeting where we can discuss various ideas please do let me know - marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk or 07835952754



Tania, Tom and Thea Plant (from Treloyvan Farm, the Watkins family) have welcomed a new sibling to our family.

"Ten little fingers, ten perfect toes, fill our hearts with love that overflows."

James Tobias Plant was born 30th April 2021

"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord." - Psalm 127:3

Sonja Watkins



Llantilio bell ringers met at the end of June to discuss how to respond to the latest guidance on church bell ringing from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers. The group agreed to amend its Covid risk assessment to allow the group to restart Tuesday practices and ringing for Sunday services and weddings. During these times the number of ringers present in the tower will be limited to six. This will allow meaningful group practices ahead of ringing for church services. The bell ringers will be ringing in Llantilio on Sunday 1st August. At the first Tuesday practice everyone thought they were a little bit rusty after such a long period without any ringing. However, Llantilio residents reported their delight at being able to hear the bells once again.

Llanvapley News

Many churches have taken to putting posters outside the church. **Llanvapley Church** puts up a sign to let people know when there is a church service. Other churches choose to put up messages or slogans to make people think, such as 'Praise God – come rain or shine!'. Over the last week of very hot weather it would have been appropriate to put up a poster saying 'Join our church – it's cool inside!' Churches are generally very cold buildings as they are made of stone and are often surrounded by trees which shade the building. Following a week of high temperatures it was surprising to note that the temperature inside the church rose to a very unusual 22.2 degrees C. For once it won't be possible to claim it will be cool inside unless you mean 'fashionably attractive or impressive'!

Twenty is plenty for Llanvapley Cricket Club! The mid week teams remain unbeaten after three competitive games beating Nevill Hall Doctors, Glangrwny and Clytha, with the last game going to a very dramatic last ball win! There's always action, lots of twists and turns with plenty of action with the batting at the top of the order with hard hitting from Frazer Kirby, Adam Harding, Tim Swanson, Freedy Aitkien and John Meredith. Adam Binmore is a middle order stalwart, scoring many runs and remaining not out, but the star is Adam Harding who the opposition can't get out leading to an average of over a 100! Bowling is a team effort, with everyone having the opportunity to show their talents with the ball, with Usam, Shah, Kieran Jenkins, Hugh Powell and Phil Harding starring with some valuable wickets and tight bowling. A new wicket keeping star, Adam Binmore has been discovered, keeping wicket with confidence and skill.

Sunday cricket has been mixed with rain affected fixtures, but Llanvapley haven't lost, drawing in-time games. We are looking forward to many more games on a Sunday and it would be great to have some more spectators and cheer leaders. The interesting fact about Llanvapley is that we never have the same team playing consecutive games due to a number of reasons, so if you fancy a game, let us know! Llanvapley is a fun and friendly team, come along and see.

Llanvapley is run by a band of willing volunteers who cut, roll and prepare the wicket allowing for the games to be played, ably led by Rob Kerby with dedicated Sunday (Hugh Powell) and mid-week (Phil Harding) captains leading the teams. Thank you to the Red Hart for providing hospitality at the end of the game for both teams where great discussions take place about the incredible bowling, great running catches and massive sixes from Anthony Squire. I don't think the pitch is big enough for him with his powerful hitting!

Great news has been received by the club recently with an awarding of a grant for a new artificial wicket and a practice net. We are looking forward

to it being installed from September and spending hours practising on it and the occasional match. This is enhanced by the new container keeping the historic equipment dry and ready for action. *John Meredith*

Llanvapley Cricket Club Fixtures in August

Sunday 8th Cardiff Casuals at home 2.30pm

As duck lovers, we have three gorgeous Cayuga ducks that regularly produce offspring that keep us on our toes until they 'fly the nest' so to speak and move on to new loving homes. A few weeks ago, we received a call from a lady in Coed Morgan, who had found a tiny duckling under her car tyre! No sign of mother duck or siblings, so she asked if I'd be interested. How could we refuse?! Introducing **Marty Wild**, our mallard. For his first few weeks, he had two of our Cayuga ducklings sharing his home and teaching him to swim! Once he's old enough to fly, we will let him out to free range, as our own ducks do. It'll be his choice to stay with us or whether the call of the wild will see him fly high. *Nicola Evans*



We are fortunate to see **Spotted Flycatchers** (*Muscicapa striata*) in our Llanvapley garden every summer, and they seem to like one open fronted nest box (photo) in particular. It's quite something to think that these plucky little summer migrant visitors, about the size of a robin, come all the way here from sub Saharan Africa. Like the Swift, this is sadly another bird that is in trouble, having declined in numbers by about 80% over the last forty years, and as a result it is a Red Listed species of conservation concern. The reasons for this decline are not fully understood but are probably a combination of predation, a lack of flying insects, and possibly deforestation in their African wintering grounds. Survival rates seem to be better in gardens than in open country and you can just make out five chicks in our nesting box, so we hope to be enjoying their wonderfully acrobatic insect catching flight in a week or so. *Thomas Lowes*



Llanvapley Walking Group

Not one socially distanced July walk but two! The first was on Saturday 3rd following the summer rain that made the fields a little too muddy. Unperturbed, we decided to take a four mile walk along the easier to navigate lanes to Coed Morgan and Llanddewi Rhydderch and met at least one landowner who made



helpful suggestions about the route through his land. As always it was great to walk together and the rain held off while we were out and about. But what a contrast with our second walk on the evening of Thursday 22nd July, during the summer heatwave. With the temperature still in the high 20s despite starting after 6pm, the intrepid Llanvapley crew navigated footpaths through fields on a two and a half mile route around the village and celebrated making it back by quenching their thirst in the Red Hart. We'll be walking again on Saturday 7th August at 10.30am from Llanvapley Pavilion - car parking available if you would like to join us, all welcome. Also, watch the email for another evening walk later in August too. If you'd like more information please let me know by email at: llanvapleywalkinggroup@gmail.com. or just come along on the day. *Phil Allsopp*

The committee of the **Llanvapley Sports and Social Association** met on Wednesday 14th July. The committee decided to review its covid risk assessment to match current government guidelines.

There are a number of small maintenance jobs which are outstanding. The committee would like to find a local odd job person who is looking for work. (Please contact the secretary if you are able to help llanvapleyvillagecommittee@gmail.com)

The village noticeboard has been tidied up and residents are encouraged to use the noticeboard to publicise village events and village information.

It has been some time since the pavilion has been used for a village social event. Covid regulations enable events to take place but precautions and covid rules will still be in place. A BBQ has been arranged for the end of August (details below) and it is hoped to restart the monthly coffee mornings in the autumn.

Llanvapley Sports and Social Association

Summer Barbecue

Llanvapley Sports Pavilion

Friday 27th August 6.30pm

£8 - under 10's £4

The LSSA committee is delighted to announce the return of the village BBQ.

Hopefully the weather will be kind which will allow everyone to make best use of the pavilion and the outside space. Only 20 people are allowed inside the pavilion (face masks needed when not seated) but a marquee will be set up to allow everyone to spread out safely.

Apart from burgers, sausages and salads there will also be a range of delicious puddings to finish off the meal. Vegetarian options will be available.

Please bring your own drinks as we do not have a license to sell alcohol.

A warm welcome is extended to village residents and friends.

For further information please contact the secretary

llanvapleyvillagecommittee@gmail.com

Llanvetherine News

Millie Sian Dawson was christened at St James the Elder on Saturday 10th July. Godparents and family attended from five different counties in England and two in Wales. The Godparents were Sarah (Alice's cousin), and Sam and Hannah, friends from Clevedon, and the readings were given by Alison (Alice's Godmother), Alice and Sally. It was a moving privilege for Andrew to be able to perform the Baptism for his own granddaughter. The family and Godparents enjoyed lovely refreshments in the garden at Southleigh afterwards, served by Vicky Crabtree and family. The occasion was a wonderful opportunity for many of the family to catch up after many months of 'covid restrictions', many of whom were meeting Millie for the first time just after her first birthday. We were very lucky with the weather which was very bright despite the forecast of rain, especially as the gathering had to be outside. *Andrew Dawson*



White Castle Vineyard wins a gold medal!

Our dream of 12 years came true with our first entry to the Decanter World Wine Awards 2021 with our Pinot Noir Reserve made from Pinot Noir Précoce vintage 2018. To win a Gold was beyond our dream, however this underpins everything we strive to achieve in producing quality Welsh wine. It's been a roller-coaster of excitement, many congratulations and well wishes from near and far, something that we will cherish forever.

World wide coverage of our achievement began with a press release in the Guardian, radio and social media coverage and our very own local press also shared our triumphs. Roy Noble from BBC Sounds congratulated Robb and myself "First Gold winning Welsh wine from @welshwines" at Decanter world wine awards 2021.

Visitor numbers to the vineyard have increased and congratulations continue to flood in. We also had a message from Kylie Minogue congratulating us on our success. There has also been a whistle stop visit to London for a live television interview with Sarah Jane Evans MW, live on 67 Pall Mall TV, which is certainly an accolade.

Robb and I have been overwhelmed and here are a few quotes that have been in the tabloids and social media.

Food & Drink Industry Welsh Red: ex postal worker and retired nurse grab a gold with a pinot noir. Monmouthshire's White Castle Vineyard scoops top prize against global rivals in prestigious blind tasting award.

walesonline.co.uk The ex postman who now produces some of the best wine in the world... White Castle Vineyard - which Robb Merchant owns with wife and former nurse Nicola - was named among the best in the world this week.

Visit Monmouthshire. It's not just our Olympians who are aiming for Gold this summer, as Monmouthshire's White Castle Vineyard has won its own gold medal at the prestigious Decanter World Wine Awards. It's the first Welsh wine to win a gold medal, beating competition from France, America & around the world in a blind tasting. The winning wine was White Castle's Pinot Noir Reserve 2018, a red wine praised for its 'deliciously fresh' taste.

Nicola, White Castle Vineyard



Food & drink industry

Welsh red: ex-postal worker and retired nurse grab gold with a pinot noir

Monmouthshire's White Castle Vineyard scoops top prize against global rivals in prestigious blind tasting award

Zoe Wood

@zoeewoodguardian

Wed 7 Jul 2021 06:01 BST



Penrhos News

Mat Burhouse has recently been out photographing wildlife in the local area. Mat has send in the following report and his excellent photographs for you to enjoy.

'A few weekends ago during the sunny spell, I had the fortune of borrowing a nice camera with a telephoto lens and managed to get some good wildlife shots in our garden.'



Wren with a beak full of insects.



Male Broad-bodied Chaser on a purple Flag Iris.

A very broad dragonfly, 39-48mm long, usually found at ponds and small lakes and may be the first to colonise new ponds.



Female Emperor Dragonfly laying her eggs.

Britain's bulkiest Dragonfly at around 78mm long and is mostly associated with large, well vegetated ponds and lakes.

Covid and church attendance

The Diocese of Monmouth has responded to the changes to Covid regulations in Wales made on 17th July. In summary, this is how it affects our churches.

- The requirement to maintain two-metre social distancing is still in place
- The capacity of buildings still depends on its ability to maintain social distancing.
- The wearing of face coverings remains a requirement.
- The need to provide for hand sanitising and premises cleaning remains.
- Households and extended households ('bubbles') can sit together but still with social distancing between other individuals or bubbles.
- The serving of tea and coffee etc after services can now take place indoors.
- Congregational singing should only be considered where incidence of coronavirus cases are low.

It is the duty of churchwardens to understand the regulations and to do a risk assessment. This can be very difficult as things are changing quickly and there is so much going on in the news. One of our readers, Andrew Meek from Brynderi, has contacted TNT to make the point that government

ministers are now suggesting covid passports could be a condition of entry to churches and other public places. Andrew said

"It is clear they have no intention of getting rid of locking us down and making us show that we are compliant. Maybe now is the time for people to wake up as to what is actually happening! The devil and his human team have been very busy of late and they are not going to give up. If the church and its hierarchy do nothing to fight this tyranny – "bye, bye church – nice knowing you!". Using the "foot in the door" system, first it was masks, then distancing, now a medical intervention (totally untested) will be imposed on the weakened and exhausted sheeple."

Further relaxation of covid regulations is expected to happen in August and we will await the response and advice from the Diocese.

WI News

The WI have really made a splash this month! Many members enjoyed a wonderful, warm water swim in Angela's pool and relaxed in the beautiful garden in the sun. Everyone wants to thank her for this super afternoon and they were so well behaved that Angela has been kind enough to invite us again! The date has been set for the 18th August, depending on the weather, of course.



August 11th will also give the opportunity for the WI to visit Highfield Gardens. This beautiful garden is part of the National Garden Scheme and will open especially on this date for the WI. Arrangements have been made to open between 4pm and 8pm, which will give those members working a chance to enjoy it too. Tea and coffee will be available to buy but members are advised to bring along a picnic. There are many seats to sit on and take in this excellent garden. Thanks are given to Jan Eastment for arranging this event.

Llantilio Crossenny WI seem to have the great fortune of having the weather on its side at the moment! Saturday 24th July could have been sweltering hot, like the rest of the week, or raining as predicted but NO the cool dry weather was just what was needed, for the launch of the L.C.W.I Cook Book. The afternoon proved to be a massive success! Joe Conlan, Keiko's son, the graphic designer of the book, was in



attendance to receive thanks from the members. Thanks were also given to Elsie and Vicar Heidi for allowing the event to take place on the church grounds.

The book has been very well received and we will need a rerun of the printing after the first 100 have been distributed to members, their families and friends. So anyone needing more copies should contact Lin.

The reputation of the L.C.W.I. choir has brought them the request to sing some gospel songs at St. Woolas Cathedral, on 4th December. Gwent Federation Centenary celebrations have all had to be cancelled this year so far. But it is hoped that this Christmas Concert, to mark one hundred years will be able to go ahead. This will also give an opportunity for our beautiful banner to be on display!

Having had such a successful year of celebrations for our own centenary, it is sad that this should be the situation for Gwent Federation. Bearing in mind that our founder Lady Mather Jackson was also co-founder of what was then the Monmouthshire Federation, it is fitting that we should help with these celebrations.

In fact our own garden party was such a success that Lynne Stubbings, past national chair of WI, acknowledged how much she had enjoyed it in her farewell message!

So, well done to this wonderful band of women. Who are certainly taking advantage of the summer months. After all we have no idea what is round the corner during these uncertain times. So keep smiling and let's make the most of it! *Lin*

Harvest celebrations Last year none of our churches were able to hold services of celebration for the harvest. Hopefully we will be having details of this year's harvest services in next month's TNT. Decorating the church is an important part of the harvest celebrations. The focal point of the decorations is often a harvest loaf. I wonder how many of our readers will remember the very successful harvest loaf workshop held in Llanvapley pavilion which was run by Janet Andrews.

In recent years many people have started to make harvest wreaths to decorate their houses. This year a workshop is being held to help you to learn how to make your own autumn / harvest wreath. Details are below.



Harvest Wreath Workshop

Welcome the harvest home:

Capture the bounty of summer with a seasonal wreath for your home.

This FREE workshop is @ Llanfair Kilgeddin Village Hall, NP79BD

7th August, 10am - 12.30pm

Training / Venue will be COVID compliant.

Booking essential due to COVID restrictions!

For more information or to book a place please contact:

lucindajames@monmouthshire.gov.uk

In the Spotlight

In this month's edition of The New Times the spotlight has fallen on one of our hard working and dedicated church treasurers. But how well do we really know **David Hughes-Jones** from Llanvetherine? TNT tried to find out more by putting him 'In the Spotlight'.

How long have you been a treasurer of Llanvetherine Church?

I have been a church warden at Llanvetherine for 40 years. I was asked to be a warden and a year or so later took over the duties of the treasurer as well. This seemed to be a daunting task as it meant producing a balance sheet at the end of the year. No computer to help in the early eighties, all done with pen and paper.

You are also the churchwarden? Churchwardens organise services and keep the congregation and the vicar in order. Can you remember anything ever going wrong?

I have shared the duties of church warden with five others and many years ago, when we were waiting for the new vicar to start duties the Rural Dean had not allocated a member of the clergy to take the service. The starting time came and went so it was decided that I would take the service, no preparation just a wing and a prayer. During a PCC meeting, discussing the grass cutting in the churchyard an elderly member suggested we buy "one of those mowers that you wear around your neck", it took a while to realise that we needed to consider a strimmer!

What is your earliest memory?

Probably my earliest memory is being told off for tipping over a bowl with young seedlings that my mother had been nurturing. I have been careful in the garden ever since.

What is your biggest fear?



Shirley not baking any more Welsh Cakes.

How would you describe your house?

Our house is lived in, homely, child friendly, bursting with wall to wall love. Why don't you come and see for yourself, hope you won't be disappointed.

Do you have any gardening passions?

No gardening passion as such but I do enjoy growing our own vegetables. I do get a buzz when I have grown all the veg for a Sunday lunch.

What is your favourite supermarket and why?

As for a favourite supermarket, any one that I see in the rear view mirror and on the way home.

How do you keep fit?

I hope that I keep fit whilst gardening and working on our small holding. I am increasingly called upon to provide opposition for Josh Adams and Gareth Bale aka grandson Lloyd who is very competitive against his dadcu. (grandfather, my favourite role).

What makes you mad?

I am normally very tolerant but people who drop litter in our lovely countryside annoy me, in fact any action showing a lack of care and respect annoys me.

You are a member of a local choir. Apart from music for choirs, what sort of music do you enjoy?

My choice of music would usually be any song I can sing along to.

Do you have any pets?

Pets. Now what an interesting question. We have a Chocolate Labrador, Jack, that we were "forced to adopt", a cat that adopted us (the night that our terrier died 11 years ago) a pony that I look after for our grand daughter and some sheep. No we do not have any pets.

What occasion has caused you the most embarrassment?

I can not think of any embarrassing moments, maybe our readers can remind me of what might have embarrassed me.

Have you ever met anyone famous?

As I studied Botany at Cardiff University I have always enjoyed any television programme about plants. One such programme was Bellamy on Botany. In a college reunion David Bellamy was the guest speaker and I was very pleased to meet and shake hands with him. Russell Grant once opened a fete at Llanvetherine. I have attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace but did not get to meet the Queen.

What is your favourite food and favourite drink?

I eat almost anything (NOT ginger biscuits) I enjoy all other food and take the view that if a meal is worth cooking, it is worth eating. Going out to eat is a guilty pleasure and happy to eat almost anywhere.

What is your favourite place to eat?

What is your favourite place to go on holiday?

I enjoy self catering holidays, not because we cater for ourselves but we can eat anywhere and enjoy any cuisine. I like going to Lanzarote and we have been there several times. Weather good, plenty of nice places to eat and can enjoy a glass of red wine or a cool lager.

I guess you are a fan of rugby. What is your favourite sporting moment?

My favourite sporting moment without doubt was in 1999, Wales played "at home" in Wembley Stadium against England. Max Boyce and Tom Jones had set the scene. Wales were behind with minutes to go. Along came Scott Gibbs, was passed the ball, cut through the (English) defence, punched the air and scored a the try for Neil Jenkins to convert. It took the wheels off several chariots. Great moment. By the way, I was there!

Do you have any DIY skills?

DIY I get by and can turn my hand to most things except plumbing and have found electrical work shocking so don't do that either.

You used to be a teacher? What do you miss about being a teacher?

I enjoyed being a teacher for over 30 years. Got to know some great people as pupils and colleagues. Some great moments but the one I am reminded most is when the experiment had been set up to show that an animal respire ("breathes"). Whilst waiting for the indicator for carbon dioxide to change colour, the gerbil went to the toilet. Years later I get asked, do you remember when the gerbil crapped in the bell jar. Nice to know I have changed lives!

You are also a county councillor. Do you have any amusing stories from council meetings? Any 'Jackie Weaver' moments?

No embarrassing council events to relay, yet.

If you were the First Minister for a day what would you do?

Put in some legislation to re-think the notion of Ministry Areas and involve all church goers as to how we should proceed into the future. It is never fair to get "solutions" imposed and why is it ever fair that the view of the person in power is the one that has to be obeyed by everyone! Give Aberystwyth and Llanvetherine city status as they are both cities in my mind. would allocate a major fund towards improving the roads of Monmouthshire. I would allocate a major fund to improve the roads in Monmouthshire. Give pensioners, or retired teachers (I have not worked out the finer details!) a pay rise. Recommend Revd. Heidi to become a Dame, I might owe her money.

Church Services in August

Sunday 1st August Trinity 9

9.30am Llanvetherine

11am Llantilio Crossenny

Sunday 8th Trinity 10

9.30am Penrhos

11am Llanvapley

Sunday 15th Blessed Virgin Mary

9.30am Llanvetherine

11am Llantilio Crossenny

Saturday 21st August

Wedding Llantilio Crossenny

Sunday 22nd Trinity 12

9.30am Penrhos

11am Llanvapley

3pm Llanvetherine Baptism

Covid Safety Measures

If you wish to attend a service please contact us in advance.

For Penrhos please contact Mr Richard Price

whitehousefarmuk@gmail.com 780246

For Llanvetherine please contact David Hughes Jones

davidwhjones@btinternet.com

01873 821 497

For Llanvapley please contact Les Taylor
lestaylor.taylor@gmail.com 780376

For Llantilio please contact Elsie Latham
elsie.latham@gmail.com 780225

Overheard in The Hog's Head

I love living in Llantilio it is so quiet.

Yes I agree. I love to go cycling along all the quiet country lanes. I sometimes go around the orchards or up to White Castle I often see the vicar out on her bike.

I like cycling but don't you think it is dangerous?

What do you mean dangerous – there is hardly any traffic apart from the odd tractor or two.

I know but I am always worried I might come across a cycle path!

You can keep in touch with what is happening in our church communities via our website www.llantiliogroup.info Our website has the latest news as well as information about all our churches. We are also on Twitter @LlantilioG

*Contributions for the September issue of TNT by 20th August 2021
Please send your emails to lestaylor.taylor@gmail.com*